

## Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 EB-11 SS-20 TRSE-00 PM-07

CIAE-00 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 USIA-15 SAJ-01 MC-02 ACDA-19 DRC-01

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R 271110Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2653

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

SECDEF WASHDC

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 5633

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, MARR, NL, BEXP

SUBJECT: OUTLOOK FOR GON PURCHASE OF AMERICAN  
REPLACEMENT FIGHTER

REF: (A) STATE 240254

(B) BRUSSELS 7280

SUMMARY: IN A MEETING WITH DCM ON DEC 20, MOD STATE  
SECRETARY STEMERDINK INDICATED CONTINUED PERSONAL PREFERENCE FOR  
PURCHASE OF US REPLACEMENT FIGHTER AIRCRAFT BUT EMPHASIZED  
THAT GON DECISION WOULD BE STRONGLY, PERHAPS DECISIVELY  
INFLUENCED BY NEED TO ASSURE VIABILITY OF EUROPEAN  
AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY. STEMERDINK ALSO SPOKE FRANKLY  
OF FRENCH POLITICAL PRESSURE AND IMPLIED THAT OTHERS IN  
GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE LESS RESISTANT TO IT THAN HE WAS.  
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HE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH RECENT DPC MEETING AND

PRAISED SECRETARY SCHLESINGER AS A FIRST-RATE US "AMBASSADOR TO EUROPE". END SUMMARY.

1. DCM SAW MOD STATE SECRETARY STEMERDINK DEC 20 TO PUSH HARD FOR GON COMMITMENT TO BUY AMERICAN REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT FOR RNLA F-104S. DCM SAID OF THE THREE COMPETITORS WHO HAD SUBMITTED BIDS ONLY NORTHROP WITH ITS COBRA OFFERED A TRUE SUPERIORITY FIGHTER FOR THE YEARS AHEAD. THE COBRA WOULD FULLY RESPOND TO THE ROLE AND CAPABILITIES RECOMMENDED IN THE NATO SPECIALIZATION STUDY; THE MIRAGE AND VIGGEN WERE LESS SATISFACTORY IN THIS REGARD. DCM ALSO EVOKED THE INCREASE IN BURDEN-SHARING RESPONSIBILITY IMPOSED ON US ALLIES IN EUROPE BY THE JACKSON-NUNN AMENDMENT.

2. STEMERDINK DID NOT CHALLENGE THE TECHNICAL SUPERIORITY OF THE COBRA OVER THE FRENCH AND SWEDISH ENTRIES ALTHOUGH HE BELIEVED THAT LOCKHEED'S LANCER COULD ALSO DO THE JOB FOR THE RNLA F. DCM REPLIED THAT THE COBRA AND THE LANCER WERE BOTH EXCELLENT PLANES. STEMERDINK INDICATED THAT THERE WERE TWO MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS FOR HIS GOVERNMENT: FIRST, TO CONTRACT FOR A PLANE THAT WOULD ASSURE THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY; AND SECONDLY, HOW TO WITHSTAND FRENCH POLITICAL PRESSURE TO BUY THE MIRAGE. ON THE FIRST POINT, HE SAID THE GON DEFINITELY WANTED TO BUY A PLANE FOR WHICH SEVERAL OTHER EUROPEAN ALLIES WOULD SIMULTANEOUSLY PLACE SUBSTANTIAL ORDERS. THE GON WAS EXPLORING THIS ANGLE WITH BELGIUM, DENMARK, THE FRG AND ITALY. IF THE ITALIAN DEAL FOR LANCER WENT THROUGH, STEMERDINK SAID, THAT PLANE WOULD LOOK A LOT MORE ATTRACTIVE TO THE DUTCH. THE GON ALSO WANTED TO KEEP THE AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY IN HOLLAND AND OTHER LIKE-MINDED COUNTRIES ALIVE AND HEALTHY. THAT MADE THE OFFSET COMPONENT OF ANY CONTRACT OF VITAL IMPORTANCE. STEMERDINK INDICATED NO DISSATISFACTION WITH NORTHROP IN THIS RESPECT.

3. STEMERDINK SAID QUITE FRANKLY THAT A DECISION TO BUY THE MIRAGE WOULD NOT RPT NOT PROVIDE FOR THE "EUROPEAN SOLUTION" HE HAD IN MIND. HE AGREED WITH THE DCM THAT FOR THE DUTCH TO SIGN UP FOR THE MIRAGE WOULD CONTRAVENE THE CONFIDENTIAL

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WHOLE THRUST OF GON POLICY ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE ARAB OIL BOYCOTT. THE DCM NOTED IN THIS CONNECTION THE USG'S WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER ASSISTANCE TO THE NETHERLANDS ON ITS OIL PROBLEM, WHEREAS FRANCE, AS AN EC PARTNER, HAD SHOWN NO SYMPATHY. STEMERDINK DID NOT DEMUR, BUT MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE TO BUY FRENCH. HE ADDED THAT WHILE HE HAD SOME INFLUENCE "IN THIS BUILDING" HIS

OWN PREFERENCE FOR AN AMERICAN PLANE WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE GOVERNING.

4. IN A BRIEF EXHCNAGE RE RECENT DPC MEETING DCM SAID HE THOUGHT SECRETARY SCHLESINGER HAD DONE AN EXCELLENT JOB OF DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN NATO'S BASIC ABILITY TO FIGHT A CONVENTIONAL WAR AND THE NEED TO MODERNIZE THE EQUIPMENT AND IMPROVE THE ALERT STATUS OF NATO FORCES TO FIGHT SUCH A WAR IF THE THREAT AROSE. STEMERDINK AGREED AND PRAISED SECRETARY SCHLESINGER AS A SKILLED "US AMBASSADOR TO EUROPE." MOREOVER, SECRETARY SCHLESINGER AND MOD VREDELING HAD DEVELOPED AN EXCELLENT RAPPORT WHICH, SAID STEMERDINK, WAS MOST HELPFUL DURING THIS PERIOD OF CHANGE AND UNCERTAINTY.

5. STEMERDINK'S ONLY SOUR NOTE CONCERNED SYG LUNS, WHOM HE CONSIDERED NOT THE RIGHT MAN TO LEAD THE NATO EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN ITS DEFENCES AGAINST THE WARSAW PACT'S GROWING MILITARY CAPABILITIES. SINCE LUNS IS ANATHEMA FOR MOST DUTCH LABOR PARTY LEADERS, YOUNG AND OLD, DCM AVOIDED BEING DRAWN INTO A DISCUSSION OF HIS MERITS. INSTEAD, DCM REFERRED FAVORABLY TO LUNS' CONTENTION THAT SITUATION TODAY RESEMBLES PRE-1939 SITUATION IN EUROPE. THE LESSON FOR OUR TIMES IS THAT WE SHOULD NEVER ALLOW OUR PURSUIT OF DETENTE TO OBSCURE OUR PERCEPTION OF THE GROWING MILITARY THREAT FROM THE WARSAW PACT.

6. COMMENT: AS SEEN FROM THE HAGUE, THE TIME IS RIPE FOR AN INSTRUCTED, HIGH-LEVEL APPROACH TO THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED TO COUNTER PRESSURE FROM THE FRENCH AND MAXIMIZE CHANCES THAT THE GON AND THE OTHERS WILL CONTRACT TO BUY AN AMERICAN FIGHTER REPLACEMENT. AS REPORTING FROM THIS AND THE OTHER POSTS MAKES CLEAR, NONE OF OUR SMALLER EUROPEAN

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ALLIES WANTS TO GO IT ALONE. THEY WANT TO TEAM UP IN BUYING THE SAME PLANE FOR REASONS OF ECONOMY AND TO KEEP THEIR AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY VIABLE. EITHER THE COBRA OR THE LANCER WOULD ENABLE THEM TO SATISFY THEIR BASIC DESIDERATA. AS FAR AS THE DUTCH ARE CONCERNED, WE SENSE A DRAFT IF NOT A TILT TOWARD THE FRENCH, PERHAPS LED BY VREDELING WHOSE CONVERSION FROM PURE EUROPEANIST TO ATLANTICIST CUM EUROPEANIST MAY NOT YET BE COMPLETE.

7. THE STAKES FOR THE US ARE HIGH. THEY INCLUDE THE FUTURE ORIENTATION OF THE AIR FORCES OF SEVERAL OF OUR IMPORTANT NATO ALLIES AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A GREAT STEP TOWARD MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF JACKSON-NUNN. IN OUR JUDGMENT, THE SITUATION CALLS FOR A COORDINATED AND VIGOROUS APPROACH TO HIGH LEVELS OF THE SEVERAL GOVERNMENTS

CONCERNED TO CONVEY THE FIRM VIEWS OF THE USG ON THE  
OVERRIDING DESIRABILITY OF BUYING AN AMERICAN REPLACEMENT  
FIGHTER.  
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## Message Attributes

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